How To Read with ADHD

(if you're like me)

This is my personal guide to learning to read for fun and function with ADHD.

It's hard to do anything, let alone read, if your body and mind are in a panic mode. Reading is impossible if you're in fight/flight/freeze/fawn mode.

Slow your breathing, lower your shoulders, and embrace the possibility of boredom.

It's also important to remember that ADHD is often linked to reading disorders like Dyslexia and you may require professional help.

WHEN YOU <u>WANT</u>

TO READ:

1) YOU DON'T HAVE TO FINISH EVERY BOOK (NO ONE DOES)

The big secret of the book-loving world is that no one finishes books.

Only 7% of people who started Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* actually finished it.

Even page-turning mysteries have an average completion rate of 62%.

It is OK that you don't want to finish a book. Just make a conscious choice to set a book aside.

2) READ PREVIEW FOR FREE BEFORE BUYING

You can read the first chapter of most e-books for free on Amazon, Kobo, and Google Books. If they don't grab you, don't buy them.

3) READ A VARIETY OF FORMATS

ADHD people love novelty.

Not just for the genre of book but the format of the book too.

Try reading paperbacks, hardbacks, AND e-books. When reading e-books, switch between your e-reader, tablet, laptop and phone app. (Watch out for other distracting apps though!).

You can even change the font, line spacing and font size on your e-reader.

A shiny new cover for your e-reader also helps make reading more enticing.

4) READ A VARIETY OF BOOKS

It's easy to get hooked reading one genre of books, get bored, and then give up on reading altogether.

Don't be afraid to mix it up a little. Just tried a romance novel? Go read a thriller.

Just make sure they're books that grab your attention.

5) DON'T BUY A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Avoid walking through bookshops and impulse buying based on the cover.

It is easy to covet every gold embossed special edition that catches your
eye.

6) CHECK THE LENGTH BEFORE BUYING

Check the page count before buying. Kobo even goes so far as to estimate how long it will take you to read.

Some e-readers will display how many pages are left in the book or chapter at the bottom of each page.

This can either be a help or a hindrance. Experiment with the setting to see what helps.

7) READ IN DIFFERENT PLACES

Stand up, sit down, lie down, walk around the house, on the toilet, or even have a bath.

Just reading in different situations can provide enough novelty and excitement to keep you interested.

It also makes reading something you can do everywhere.

8) GO LARGE PRINT

My eyes often skip across the page because I'm zoning out or because I'm excited to find out what happens next.

On an e-reader, make the font as large as possible. With fewer words on the page, your eyes won't skip ahead.

9) LEARN TO SPEED READ

Place your finger under the first word and run it from left to right along the page as you read.

Move your finger faster and faster until you can't keep up anymore. Then slow down a little.

This has several benefits:

a) The finger stops your eyes darting away.

b) Reading fast helps your eyes keep up with your brain.

c) The excitement of reading fast is thrilling!

d) It increases comprehension (if you're not too fast).

8) READ WITH A INDEX CARD

Put a postcard under the line you're reading to keep focused. You can also write notes about who the characters are to keep track of the plot.

And, it makes a handy bookmark.

WHEN YOU HAVE

TO READ

These tips are useful for when you HAVE to read something for work or study. You can use many of the tips above as well as the following.

1) LISTEN TO AUDIOBOOKS

You can control the speed of audiobooks and listen anywhere you like.

2) READ IN LAYERS

Instead of reading a document from start to finish, try reading it layer by layer. As you read, mark areas you'd like to come back to.

a) Read a summary or abstract if one is available.

b) Read all the headings.

c) Read all the sub-headings and first-lines of each section.

d) Read break-outs.

e) What questions have been raised by the text? Hunt for the answers.

This technique was taught to me by a high-functioning, high-achieving student who found himself at Harvard with more reading to do than was physically possible.

It will take a little longer to get through the entire document BUT it will help you skip unimportant information.

3) USE SPREEDER

www.spreeder.com/app.php is a website that takes any article and then shows you

one ...
word ...
at ...
a ...
time.

Your eyes don't move from a single spot on the screen as each word appears in front of you.

At high speeds, reading becomes a thrilling experience where you are just along for the ride. (And there's a pause/rewind button if you get lost)

4) TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE READING

Try to explain what you've read to someone else using as simple language as possible.

Imagine you're talking to a five-year-old.

Or, if you don't have one, use Simple Writer. The app only lets you use the most common words in the English language.

5) Be careful of ChatGPT

While AI is pretty good at summarising and explaining information, it often makes mistakes.

If it's an important article, best to avoid AI.